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the Galilean Ministry. (3) Study now the three parables, getting in mind a picture of each in its details. (4) Observe Jesus' conception of the condition of publicans and sinners, (a) they are "lost,"\* (b) exhausted, foolish sinners—"sheep," (c) lost to God's use and value in God's world—"coins," † (d) profligate and wicked like the "son," (e) yet they are "sons" and are recoverable. (5) Consider whether the above conception of Jesus (a) to (d) may not be his acceptance of the Pharisaic idea of them for the sake of argument. (6) Note now Jesus' view of the situation, (a) to find the lost sheep and the lost coin, ‡ (b) to show that the "lost son" will be welcomed to God's favor, that in heaven there is joy over repentant sinners, (c) to show the Pharisees that they ought to be glad, too, but that in reality they, with all their privileges, are selfish and unkind, (d) to draw the Pharisees over to his way of thinking about publicans and sinners, (e) to inspire the publicans and sinners with hope and desire of forgiveness and acceptance with God.

#### 4. Religious Teaching.

The student may note the thoughts gathering about the *Picture of God's Love*: (1) out of His free grace He seeks lost sinners, (2) He regards degraded men as God's "lost sons" and welcomes them, when they repent, (3) the selfish exclusiveness of more favored "sons" is kindly but searchingly rebuked.

#### STUDIES XXXV. AND XXXVI.—PARABLES OF DUTY AND WARNING. LUKE 16 : 1-17 : 10.

**Remark.**—It is desirable that in beginning this "study" (1) the material of the preceding "study" be reviewed, and (2) the entire passage assigned be read over rapidly and the main divisions of the narrative noted.

### I. EXAMINATION OF THE MATERIAL.

[It will be noted that the following order is observed invariably in this work ; (1) the verse or section is read and its contents stated in a general way ; (2) important or difficult words and phrases are studied ; (3) a complete statement of the contents of the verse or section is formed in view of the work already done ; (4) the religious teaching is sought.]

#### § 1. Chapter 16 : 1-13.

1. The student, after reading, may note the following subject : *Parable of the unrighteous Steward.*

\* The state indicated . . . is one from which recovery is possible. Bruce, *Par. Teach.*, p. 293.

† The value of the coin in the eyes of the possessor is the main point. . . . A lost man is a blank in His treasury. *Riddle*, p. 230.

‡ Jesus, seeing the miserable plight of the lost sheep of the house of Israel, sought to be a Shepherd to them. Bruce, p. 266.

The repentance of the meanest of mankind (lost coin), however insignificant in social position or degraded in character, calls forth a sympathetic thrill in the heart of God. *Ibid.*, p. 278.

2. Words and phrases of importance or difficulty are : (1) *unto the disciples* (16 : 1), perhaps especially to those of 15 : 1 who had been moved by the parables of Ch. 15 to follow him ; (2) *what shall I do* (16 : 3), he acknowledges his own knavery ; (3) vs. 3 and 4 are a soliloquy in which the *they* (v. 4) is explained by the *debtors* of v. 5 ; (4) *write fifty* (16 : 6), the method which the steward took was one of many which he might have chosen, this one benefited him only indirectly ; (5) *commended* (16 : 8), i. e. his shrewdness ; (6) *sons of this world*, i. e. those who find their life in the affairs of the present ; (7) *sons of the light*, i. e. those who find their life in that "light" which symbolizes moral and spiritual truth ; (8) *wiser*, make better use of the forces belonging to the sphere and course of their existence ; (9) *and I say* (16 : 9), i. e. "in view of this greater wisdom, bestir yourselves ;" (10) *friends*, so use money as to win the favor of (a) the poor, (b) the angels, (c) God ; (11) *mammon of unrighteousness*, (a) "money that is gained by and so characterized by unrighteousness," (b) had not the publicans so gained their money ? (12) *very little* (16 : 10), like this money ; (13) *faithful in the unrighteous mammon* (16 : 12), i. e. "so used this money which you as wicked publicans unrighteously gained ?" (14) *true riches*, i. e. "grow in right character ;" (15) v. 12 is parallel to v. 11 ; (16) *two masters* (16 : 13), "if you have taken God as your master you must now make money your servant."
3. A summary of the section is as follows : *To his disciples he said, A steward, about to be dismissed for stealing, cleverly scaled down the debts of his lord's debtors, and so put them under obligation to him, much to his lord's amused admiration. For worldly men are much more shrewd in getting on than men of high, moral, and spiritual life. I tell you that you are to use your money so beneficently here as to gain the favor of heaven. Insignificant as mammon is, by your faithful stewardship of it, if you do serve God with it, you shall turn it into a source of true riches.*
4. A great religious thought here lies in the power of benevolence in the use of worldly wealth to bless the life and elevate the character.

## § 2. Chapter 16 : 14-18.

1. The subject may be given as *A Rebuke of the Pharisees.*
2. The following words may be examined : (1) *lovers of money* (16 : 14), and had caught his suggestion about benevolence as the right use of it ; (2) *exalted among men* (16 : 15), i. e. as measured by a human standard only ; (3) *law and prophets* (16 : 16), "in which you think that you have the exclusive right ;" (4) *the gospel*, etc., "the good news that the Kingdom is here, is proclaimed, and even publicans may enter, all may push their way in ;" (5) *but* (16 : 17), "though the good news is made known unto all, still the great moral laws of the past are not relaxed, rather intensified, as for example, divorce, (v. 18) "—and the implication is, how much more strict are the laws against the Pharisees' favorite sin (v. 14) !
3. Criticise the following condensation of the section : *When the avaricious Pharisees scoffed at his counsels, he replied, Your standard of excellence is false and hateful to God. You are no longer the arbiters of religious truth. From John's time the Kingdom of God has been proclaimed and all press into it. Yet the laws of this Kingdom do not relax, rather strengthen the obligations of the old law, as in this case of divorce, for to marry one that has been divorced is to commit adultery.*
4. The student may supply the religious teaching here.

## § 3. Chapter 16 : 19-31.

1. Read and consider the subject : *Parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus*.
2. (1) *now*, etc. (16 : 19), (a) is this parable connected with the foregoing? (b) if so, it is concerned either with the avarice of the Pharisees (v. 14-18), or with the general subject of the right use of wealth (vs. 1-13); (2) *laid at his gate* (16 : 20), (a) and brought into relations with him, (b) did the rich man treat him unkindly? (3) *even the dogs* (16 : 21), either (a) intensifying, or (b) alleviating his sufferings, (c) in either case degrading; (4) *Abraham's bosom* (16 : 22), (a) the Jewish name for the state of blessedness, (b) does Jesus vouch for the truth of the representation? (5) *this flame* (16 : 24), is this to be regarded as literal or figurative? (6) *receivedst thy good things* (16 : 25), the law of equity must rule; (7) *great gulf fixed* (16 : 26), i. e. "it is impossible to do what you ask;" (8) *they will repent* (16 : 30), (a) was the rich man repenting now? (b) was it natural affection that prompted him? (9) *if they hear not* (16 : 31), i. e. "the present opportunities of knowing the truth are ample, and no supernatural messenger could permanently improve their selfish lives, if they do not heed what they have."
3. The student may make his own statement of the thought of this passage.
4. Among the many teachings of this section, the primary one may be said to be the absolute necessity of active helpfulness to others as a condition of eternal life.

## § 4. Chapter 17 : 1-4.

1. The student may read and decide on a subject.
2. The following words deserve study: (1) *disciples* (17 : 1), composed as they were of the older and the newer members; (2) *occasions of stumbling*, i. e. such as are suggested in v. 2; (3) *these little ones* (17 : 2), (a) one of these newer disciples, the "publicans and sinners" who had believed? (b) had the older disciples been finding fault with them or holding aloof from them? (c) were they as a result becoming disturbed, angered? (4) *brother sin* (17 : 3), (a) as these elder disciples, or (b) as the newer ones, had been doing? (c) they are all "brothers"; (5) *seven times* (17 : 4), is this literal or figurative?
3. Criticise the following statement of the contents : *He tells the disciples that doubtless it must be that some will give occasion to others to sin and fall, but that such would better even be drowned in the depths of the sea than cause one of these new disciples to fall. Let them all see to it that they be forgiving to sinning brethren even to the seventh degree.*
4. Are not the dangers suggested here, lest older brethren cause the younger and less experienced ones to fall, and lest the younger be inclined to be too critical of older ones and unforgiving toward them—worthy of thought on the part of all?

## § 5. Chapter 17 : 5-10.

1. Read and criticise the subject *Parable of the Extra Service*.
2. (1) *Apostles* (17 : 5), had they been in sympathy with the spirit of those in 17 : 1, 2? (2) *faith*, in what? (a) in God as a general condition without specific reference, (b) in Jesus' methods of dealing with publicans and sinners, making them disciples, (c) so that they might practice this forgiveness and avoid the sins of 17 : 1-4? (3) *ye would say* (17 : 6), is the implication that they did not have it? (4) *but* (17 : 7), "you have been asking for an increase of faith, as though that was wanted to make you more forgiving or more willing to enter into my plans, but know that it is not faith that is wanted;" (5) *come straightway*, i. e. "now that you have finished your day's work;" (6) *make ready . . . and afterwards*

(17 : 8), "do this extra service first ;" (7) *all the things commandea* (17 : 10), "even the extra service which I may demand ;" (8) *unprofitable*, (a) i. e. "who have done nothing to boast of ;" (b) in going to the greatest lengths in forgiving (v. 4), (c) and thus in all other elements of Christian service, (d) the ground of all this, the fact that they are servants by glad consent of one who has saved them.

3. The student may make out the statement of the contents of the section.
4. Is not an important religious thought here the teaching that because we are servants of God we must be willing to do anything which may be required, even extra service, without complaining and without taking praise to self?

## II. CLASSIFICATION OF THE MATERIAL.

### 1. Contents and Summary.

- 1) **The Contents.** The following table of contents is to be mastered.

#### PARABLES OF DUTY AND WARNING.

- § 1. PARABLE OF THE UNRIGHTEOUS STEWARD.
- § 2. A REBUKE OF THE PHARISEES.
- § 3. PARABLE OF THE RICH MAN AND LAZARUS.
- § 4. OCCASIONS OF STUMBLING.
- § 5. PARABLE OF THE EXTRA SERVICE.

- 2) **The Summary.** The student may make a summary of the contents of the passage according to examples already given.

### 2. Observations upon the Material.

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| <p>252) 16 : 1. Many of the publicans, his disciples, may have been in exactly the same position as the steward ; many may have been in the past as dishonest as he.</p> <p>253) 16 : 1-7. The method of managing a large estate in Jesus' time is here clearly illustrated.</p> <p>254) 16 : 8. It is in the "head for business" that the typical "sons of this world" always surpass the true "children of light."</p> <p>255) 16 : 9-13. If the suggestions are made to the publican-disciples especially, it seems that they are told how to make the right use of their wealth which formerly they had gained by unrighteousness.*</p> | <p>256) 16 : 1-8. The incongruous and unpleasant comparisons of this parable may be explained by the fact that Jesus is addressing repentant publicans and sinners, and taking them on their own ground in a typical case which they could recognize as applying directly to them.</p> <p>257) 16 : 16. The Kingdom of God had been announced in such a way that not privileged Pharisees but every one might rush into it.</p> <p>258) 16 : 19, 20. The rich man was at fault because he did not avail himself of the opportunity to help Lazarus as he lay at his gate.†</p> |
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\* This was a most appropriate lesson for the wealthy publicans, men whose moral character had been sapped by previous practice of oppression and knavery. They, having come to Christ, had now to live a new life, and to use their wealth for the Kingdom of God. *Lindsay*, p. 191.

The very thought that their wealth, which was now their own in the sense that they were responsible for it, really did belong to those who had been, consciously or unconsciously, in the complex workings of social life, deprived of it, was an additional warning against using wealth in foolish, selfish fashion. *Ibid.*, p. 192.

† By representing Lazarus as laid at the rich man's gate, He affirms the existence of opportunities of the most obtrusive sort forcing themselves on men's attention, and not to be escaped . . . When once it is understood that Lazarus is but a symbol for ample, urgent, unescapable opportunity, it is seen to be the obvious implication that Dives is one who neglects his opportunities. *Bruce, Parabolic Teaching*, p. 386.

- 259) 16 : 23-26. The rich man is suffering because he did not so use his wealth in this life as to make friends in the life to come. What brought him to Hades was inhumanity.
- 260) 16 : 27-31. The teaching here seems to be that the Old Testament ought to be sufficient to teach lessons of humanity and benevolence to those who know and read it. \*
- 261) 17 : 1-4. A very serious crisis seems to have occurred among the disciples themselves consequent on the reception of publicans and sinners.
- 262) 17 : 5, 6. Jesus would have the apostles know that not by having faith increased but by exercising the faith they have, can these great things be wrought. †
- 263) 17 : 7-10. The harsh representation of God is due to the sentimental and practically selfish attitude of mind in the apostles. They are to be rudely awakened to their duty.

### 3. Topics for Study.

The topic here given is merely a rearrangement and reconsideration of the "observations" already made.

**Teaching following the Parables of Grace.** [Obs. 252, 255-263]: (1) Recall the teaching of Ch. 15, and consider the probability of an addition of disciples from the new hearers to the company of Jesus. (2) Observe the propriety of the form in which his teaching (16 : 1-13) is given to such new disciples, (a) publicans and sinners were rich, (b) their moral sense had been weakened by unrighteous doings. (3) Notice the point to which his teaching was directed, (a) the right use of wealth acquired by dishonesty, (b) the absolute necessity for such right use of wealth (16 : 19-31). (4) Consider the probability of a division among the disciples—the old and the new followers—as being suggested in 17 : 1-4. (5) Think over (a) the spirit of the older disciples as shown in 17 : 1, 5, (b) of the newer ones in 17 : 3, 4, (c) the reply of Jesus in 17 : 2, 3, 4, 6, (d) the emphatic parable of 17 : 7-10.

### 4. Religious Teaching.

The chief thoughts of the passage seem to gather about *the wise employment of one's property*: (1) though gained in the sinful past by unrighteousness, it may be redeemed and transformed into character by beneficence, (2) the crowning sin which brings spiritual ruin is the neglect of opportunity to do good with money, (3) what applies to wealth may also be true of poverty, the spirit of the poorer disciples seems to have been the reverse of kindly toward the newer ones—hence the warning of 17 : 2, (4) the spirit of unselfishness is to be emphasized, which rich and poor alike must strive to manifest—it is God's standard of eminence (16 : 15).

\* For the life of selfishness there is no excuse on the score of ignorance. In making this the lesson of the concluding part, we assume that the request of Dives in behalf of his brethren is indirectly self-excuse. Bruce, *Parabolic Teaching*, p. 395.

It implies that these books were sufficient as a guide of life to all men of right dispositions without any further extraordinary means of grace, and that when they failed, a better result could not be reached by any conceivable means. *Ibid.*, p. 397.

† There was something, it may be, false in the ring of that prayer, an unreal diffidence asking for that as a gift which really comes only through active obedience, and the experience which is gained through it. *Plumptre*, p. 279.

You think the duties I enjoin too hard for your faith, but this shows that you have as yet no faith of the high order you ought to have, for the smallest measure of such faith would enable you to do what seems altogether impossible in the natural world. *Riddle*, p. 251.

The disciples scarce knew what faith was when they pleaded the lack of it as an excuse for not forgiving their brother. *Lindsay*, p. 195.